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THE SOUTHERNER,

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AGRICULTURAL.

From the Working Farmer.

BOOK FARMING

AND ITS VALUE APPLIED TO AGRICULTURE.

Messrs. Editors:—In various conversations held with practical farmers of this country, I have understood them to say that, while they regarded ashes as a good manure for any kind of a crop, it is especially so for the sweet potato. Indeed, if the marshals, when taking the census of these upper districts, had asked this question in every farm-house: "What do you consider the best application for the Sweet Potato?" the answer of every one observant of matters of this kind, would have been, "that ashes was about the best manure to ensure a potato crop." Taking it for granted that I am correct in my premises, I think it can be satisfactorily shown, that Book Farming is not the "nonsense" it is deemed to be, by many planters and farmers scattered throughout our land.

In the year 1844, the Black Oak Agricultural Society, of South Carolina, with a highly commendable liberality, employed that distinguished chemist, Prof. C. W. Shepard, of the Charleston medical college, to make an analysis of several of our staple products—Cotton Wool, Cotton Seed, Indian Corn and Sweet Potato. In the *Southern Agriculturist* for June, 1844, we have the analysis. That of the Sweet Potato is as follows:

100 parts of the undried potato gave 1.09 parts, or rather, over one per cent. of a whitish ash, stained in points of a greenish color. Its composition is as follows:

Carb. pot. (pearlash) with traces of soda	60.00
Phos. of lime (bone earth)	14.57
Phosphate of magnesia	5.60
Carbonate of lime	5.37
Carbonate of Magnesia	3.80
Chloride of Potassium	4.10
Sulphate of Potassa	4.35
Silica	70
Chloride calcium, sul. magnesia and lime, alumina and oxides	99
	100.00

From the foregoing analysis, it appears that 60 per cent., or more than one-half of the ash of the potato consists of carbonate of potash, or, in other words, of pearlash—the very ingredient which is extracted by all our housekeepers from ashes—the chief ingredient, in fact, of the ley employed so universally for washing clothes and making soap. Here, then, was an instance of Book Farming—here was a man who had never grown a potato—yet while seated in his laboratory in Charleston, was able to say, as well as any farmer in the land, that ashes constituted the very best manure for the sweet potato—that for this particular crop, unleached ashes are far more valuable than those which have been leached.

But there is one thing more to which I would call the attention of the reader. The analysis shows that over 14 per cent. of the ash of the sweet potato consists of the phosphate of lime, the material of which the bones of all animals are formed; so that 75 per cent. of the entire ash of the sweet potato is made up of carbonate of potash and phosphate of lime. Now it is a well known fact, that sound unleached ashes contain a notable quantity of these two very important elements, and to show this I annex the analysis of the ash of oak by Sprengel a distinguished German chemist.

100 parts of the ash of the oak consist of the following elements:

Silica	29.95
Alumina, Oxide of iron, Oxide of Magnesia	8.14
Lime	17.38
Magnesia	1.44
Potash	16.20
Soda	6.37
Sulphuric acid	3.36
Phosphoric acid	1.92
Chlorine	2.41
Carbonic acid	15.47
	100.

Now if the reader will compare this analysis with that of the potato, he will perceive that every incombustible element—that every salt needed for the growth of the potato, is either found in the ash of the oak; or may be formed from the elements existing there.

This analysis, it seems to me, is a palpable instance of the value of Book Farming. If we apply to the farmer and ask if ashes be good manure for the sweet potato, his answer is, "yes;" but if you proceed a step farther, and ask whether there is any marked difference between the effects of leached and unleached ashes, in a large majority of cases the answer would be vague—"he had not noticed particularly"—his "experiment had not been sufficiently exact to determine that point." If in turn we apply to the chemist and make the same inquiry, he answers at once—"ashes are the very best manure for the sweet potato"—we are told besides, that the potato requires a large amount of pearlash, and as leaching deprives ashes of this very ingredient, for this particular crop, unleached ashes are far more valuable than those which have been leached. The teachings of the chemist enable the farmer to realize the importance of sheltering from the weather all ashes destined for this crop; and he is also taught that if soap suds be thrown on a heap of leaves or mould, they convert them into a manure peculiarly favorable to the growth of this valuable root. Instead of vague generalities, the chemist gives exact analysis, and specific information, together with the "why" and the "wherefore." Now if all this be true with what semblance of truth can any one pretend to say that Book Farming is of no practical value.

In the summer of 1850, one of the most intelligent and successful planters of Abbeville, passed a few weeks in this neighborhood. While here, he gave it as his opinion, founded on actual experiment, that cotton might be planted in succession for many years on the same land, and without material diminution of crop, provided the land did not wash, and provided the stems, and limbs, together with all the seed, were annually returned to the soil upon which they had grown. Coming from the source this did, I regarded it as a highly interesting and valuable opinion, and one which ought to be extensively known. (I wish that I were at liberty to give the gentleman's name, as it would add much authority to what I am saying wherever he is known.) But without knowing anything of the facts, I feel confident of this, that if the gentleman referred to had not have been a Book Farmer, or in other words, if he had not have been familiar with the analysis of the cotton wool and the cotton seed, he never would have arrived at such an important conclusion. That the reader may decide for himself, I annex analysis of the cotton wool and the cotton seed, by Prof. Shepard:

100 parts by weight of the cotton wool being burnt "secundum artem," left an almost purely white ash, whose weight was rather under 1 per cent., or 0.9247. Deducting the sand from the ash, the composition is as follows:

Carbonate of potassa with possible traces of soda	44.19
Phos. of lime, with traces of magnesia	25.44
Carbonate of lime	8.87
Carbonate of magnesia	6.85
Silica	4.12
Alumina, probably accidental	1.40
Sulphate of potassa, chloride of potassium, Chloride of magnesia, sulphate of lime, Phosphate of potassa—oxide of iron	and loss 6.33
	100.

The analysis of the cotton seed is as follows:

"100 parts heated as above lost 77.45, and the thoroughly charred residuum burned under the muffle left 3.856 parts of a perfectly white ash. The composition was found to be as follows:

Phosphate of lime with traces of magnessia	61.65
Phos. of potassa with traces of soda	31.51
Sulphate of potassa	2.55
Silica	1.71
Carbonate of lime	0.51
Carbonate of magnesia	.26
Chloride of potassium	.25
Carb. of potassa, sulphate of lime, Sulphate magnesia, alumina, oxides, &c.	and loss 0.41
	100.

The Professor adds: "The ash of the cotton seed is *fourfold* that of the fibre."

If these analysis and these statements be correct, we see at once the data for the opinion given above. Nothing need be said of the stems, limbs, and leaves of the cotton, as they remain where they grew—but if, in addition to these, all the cotton seed be returned to the land from which it was taken, it is manifest that four-fifths of all the mineral element abstracted by this great market crop may be restored to the soil. If the average product of our land be 100 pounds clean cotton per acre—if the ash of the said 100 pounds be but one pound, we can readily comprehend how so small a quantity of mineral matter per acre may be furnished by the disintegration of the soil—and for a series of years without any material exhaustion.

If, by the process stated above, cotton can be continued on the same land for a succession of years, without material diminution, it places it on a vantage ground scarcely possessed by any other crop. In Maryland and Virginia, they export their hay, Indian corn, wheat and oats, and by this process their farms are deprived of salts and minerals of inestimable value. To supply the deficit, they import by a voyage of ten thousand miles, and at great cost, the Peruvian guana, and apply it to the soil. The *Southern Planter* is furnished on his own farm in the *residuum* of his cash crop, with a domestic guana, easy of transportation and easy of application, which enables him to continue his staple crop on the same land, and for series of years, without material diminution of product.

"THE OLD FARMER."

Pendleton, S. C., Oct., 1851.

The above is from the *Farmer and Planter*, published at Pendleton, S. C. and is a forerunner of new enterprize, which will prove of more value to the South than even the growing of cotton itself. Many parts of our southern country are replete with advantages for agricultural purposes, which are not possessed elsewhere;—long seasons, mild climate, rich sub-soils and vegetable deposits of inexhaustible extent—nothing is wanting but the introduction of the truths of science applied to the cultivation of the soil. If southern agriculturists will adopt the sub-soil plow, under-drain their wet lands, and add the waste bones of their animals to their soils after dissolving them in sulphuric acid, they will astonish themselve by their success as well as their neigbors. Cotton seed fermented with the black leaf-mould composing their swamps, and river deposits, will form an admirable manure for cotton, and the addition of super-phosphate of lime in fair quantities, and at small expense, will materially augment their crops of cotton, corn, sweet potatoes, and indeed will renovate the general capabilities of southern soils. We have analyzed many of these soils, and have always found those from old platations to be short of phosphate of lime. Indeed, when used as superphosphate of lime, we have yet to find the soils which are not profitably improved by its use.—[ED.]

TWO PICTURES

OF A FARMER'S HOME.

From Maj. Patrick's Address before the Jefferson Co. (N. Y.) Agricultural Society.

An industrious pair, some twenty or thirty years ago, commenced the world with strong hands, stout hearts, robust health and steady habits. By the blessing of Heaven their industry has been rewarded with plenty, and their labors have been crowned with success. The dense forest has given place to stately orchards of fruit, and fertile fields, and waving meadows, and verdant pastures, covered with the evidences of worldly prosperity. The log cabin is gone, and in its stead a fair white house, two stories; and a wing with kitchen in the rear, flanked by barns, and cribs, and granaries, and dairy houses.

But take a nearer view. Ha! what means this mighty crop of unmown thistles bordering the road? For what market is that still mightier crop of pigweed, dock and nettles destined, that fills up the space *they call* the "garden?" And look, too, at those wide, unsightly thickets of elm, and sumach, and briers, and chokeberry, that mark the lines of every fence!

Approach the house, built in the road to be *convenient*, and save land! Two stroies and a wing, and every blind shut close as a miser's fist, without a tree or srub, or flower to break the air of barrenness and desolation around it.—There it stands, white, glaring and ghastly as a pyramid of bones in the desert. Mount the unfrequented door-stone, grown over with vile weeds, and knock till your knuckles are sore. It is a beautiful moonlight October evening; and as you stand upon that stone, a ringing laugh comes from the *rear*, and satisfies you that some body lives *there*. Pass now around to the rear; but hold your nose when you come within range of the piggery, and have a care that you don't get swamped in the neighborhood of the sinkspout. Enter the kitchen. Ha! they are all alive, and here they *live*, all together. The kitchen is the kitchen, the dining-room, the sitting-room, the room of all work. Here father sits with his hat on, and in his shirt sleeves. Around him are his boys and hired men, some with hats, and some with coats, and some with neither. The boys are busy shelling corn for samp; the hired men are scraping whip stocks and whittling bow pins, throwing every now and then a sheep's eye and a jest at the girls, who, with their mother, are *doing up* the house-work. The younger fry are building cob-houses, parching corn, and burning their fingers. Not a book is to be seen, though the Winter school has commenced, and the master is going to board there. Privacy is a word of unknown meaning in that family; and if a son or daughter should borrow a book, it would be almost impossible to read in that room; and on no occasion is the front house opened, except when "company come to spend the afternoon," or when things are brushed and dusted and "set to rights."

Yet these are as honest as worthy and kind-hearted people as you will find anywhere, and are *studying out* some way of getting their younger children into a better position than they themselves occupy. They are in easy circumstances, owe nothing, and have money loaned on bond and mortgage. After much consultation, a son is placed at school that he may be fitted to go in a store, or possibly an office, to study a *profession*, and a daughter is sent away to learn books, and manners, and *gentility*. On this son or daughter, or both, the hard earnings of years are lavished; and they are reared up in the belief that whatever smacks of the country is vulgar—that the farmer is *necessarily* ill-bred, and his calling ignoble.

Now, will any one say that this picture is over-drawn? I think not. But let us see if there is not a ready way to change the whole expression and character of the picture, almost without cost or trouble. I would point out an easier, happier, and more economical way of educating those children far more thoroughly, while at the same time the minds of the parents are expanded, and they are prepared to enjoy, in the society of thir educated children, the fruits of their own early industry.

And first: let the *front* part of that house be thrown open, and the most convenient, agreeable and pleasant room in it be selected as the *family-room*. Let its doors be ever open; and, when the work of the kitchen is completed, let mothers and daughters be found *there* with their appropriate work.

Let it be the room where the family alter is erected, on which the father offers the morning and the evening sacrifice. Let it be consecrated to Neatness and Purity, and Truth. Let no *hat* ever be seen in that room on the head of its owner; let no *coatless* individual be permited to enter it. If father's head is bald, (and some there are in that predicament,) his daughter will be proud to see his temples covered by the neat and graceful silken cap that her own hands have fashioned for him. If the coat he wears by day is too heavy for the evening, calicoes are cheap, and so is cotton wadding. A few shillings placed in that daughter's hand, ensure him the most comfortable wrapper in the world; and if his boots are hard, and cut mother's carpet, a bushel of wheat once in three years will keep him in slippers of the easiest kind. Let that table which has always stood under the looking-glass, *against the wall*, be wheeled into the room, its leaves raised, and plenty of useful (not ornamental) books and periodicals be laid upon it. When evening comes, bring on the lights—and plenty of them—for sons and daughters—all who can—will be most willing students. They will read, they will learn, they will discuss the subject of their studies with each other; and parents will often be quite as much instructed as their children. The well-conducted agricultural journals of our day throw a flood of light upon the *science* and *practice* of agriculture; while such a work as Downing's Landscape Gardening, laid one year upon that centre table, will show its effects to every passer-by, for with books and studies like these, a purer taste is born and grows most vigorously.

Pass along that road after five years' working of this system in the family, and what a change! The thistles by the roadside enriched the manure heap for a year or two, and then they died. Those beautiful maples and graceful elms, that beautify the grounds around that renovated home, were grubbed from the wide hedge-rows of five years ago; and so were those prolific rows of blackberries, and bush cranberries, that shows so richly in that *neat garden* yielding abundance of small fruit in their season. The unsightly out-houses are screened from observation by dense masses of foliage; and the many climbing plants that now hang in graceful festoons from tree, and porch, and column, once clambered along that same *hedge-row*. From the meadow, from the wood, and from the gurgling stream, many a native wild flower has been transplanted to a genial soil, beneath the homestead's sheltering wing, and yields a daily offering to the household gods, by the hands of these fair priestesses who have now become their ministers. By the planting of a few trees, and shrubs, and flowers, and climbing plants around that once bare and uninviting house, it has become a tasteful residence, and its money value is more than doubled. A cultivated taste displays itself in a thousand forms, and at every touch of its hand gives beauty and value to property. A judicious taste, so far from plunging its possessor into expense, makes money for him. The *land* on which that *hedge-row* grew five years ago, for instance, has produced enough since, to *doubly pay* the expense of grubbing it, and of transferring its fruit-briars to the garden, where they have not only supplied the family with berries in their season, but have yielded many a surplus quart, to purchase that long row of red and yellow Antwerps and English gooseberries; to say nothing of the scions bought with their money, to form new heads for the trees in the old orchard.

Those sons and daughters sigh no more for town or city life, but love with intense affection every foot of ground they tread upon, every tree, and every vine, and every shrub, their hands have planted, or their taste has trained. But stronger still do their affections cling to that *family room*, where their minds first began to be developed, and to that centre-table around which they still gather with the shades of evening, to drink in knowledge, and wisdom, and understanding.

The stout farmer who once looked upon his acres only as a laboratory for transmuting labor into gold, now takes a widely different view of his possessions. His eyes are opened to the *beautiful* in nature, and looks with reverence upon every giant remnant of the forest that by good luck escaped his murderous axe in former days. No leafy monarch is now laid low without a stern necessity demands it; but many a vigorous tree is planted, in the hope that the children of *his* children may gather beneath the spreading branches, and talk with pious gratitude of him who planted them. No longer feeling the need of taxing his physical powers to the utmost, his eye takes the place of his hand, when the latter grows weary, and *mind* directs the operations of labor. See him stand and look with delighted admiration at his sons, *his educated sons*, as they take hold of every kind of work, and roll it off with easy motion, but with the power of mind in every stroke.

But it is the proud mother who takes the solid comfort, and wonders that it is so easy after all, *when one knows how*, to live at ease, enjoy the society of happy daughters and contented sons, to whom the *city folks* make most respectful bows and treat with special deference as truly *well bred ladies and gentlemen*.

Now, this is no more a fancy picture than the other. It is a process that I have watched in many families, and in different States. The results are everywhere alike, because they are natural. The same cause will always produce the same effects, varying circumstances only modifying the intensity.

Food for fattening Animals.—The Shakers at Lebanon, in the State of New York, make the following statement in the Patent Office Report. They are intelligent, practical farmers, and any opinion of this nature, coming from them, is entitled to careful consideration:

"The experience of more than thirty years leads us to estimate *ground corn* at one-third higher than *unground*, as food for cattle, and especially for fattening pork; hence it has been the practice of our Society, for more than a quarter of a century, to grind all our provender.

"The same experience induces us to put a higher value upon *cooked* than upon *raw* meal; for fattening animals, swine particularly, we consider three of cooked equal to four bushels of raw meal.

"Until within the last three or four years, our Society fattened annually, for thirty years, from 40,000 to 50,000 pounds of pork, exclusive of lard and offal fat; and it is the constant practice to cook the meal, for which six or seven potash kettles are used."

A Heavy Hog.—Dr. G. Watson, of Accomac, Va., killed a hog, a few days ago, which weighed 847 lbs. nett. The weight of each ham was 211 lbs. The animal was only eighteen months old.

BAD TEMPER.

**The following sensible remarks upon the evils of a bad temper, are from an English journal—the *Morning Star*—but they are so apposite in every attitude that we are happy to reprint them.

"A bad temper is a curse to the possessor, and its influence is most deadly wherever it is found. It is allied to martyrdom to be obliged to live with one of a complaining temper. To hear one eternal round of complaint and murmuring, to have every pleasant thought scared away by their evil spirit, is, in truth, a sore trial. It is like the sting of a scorpion—a perpetual nettle, destroying your peace, and rendering life a burden. Its influence is most deadly, and the purest and sweetest atmosphere is contaminated into a deadly miasma wherever this evil genius prevails. It has been said truly, that while we ought not to let the bad temper of others influence us, it would be as unreasonable to spread a blister of Spanish flies upon the skin, and not expect it to draw, as to think of a family not suffering because of the bad temper of any of its inmates. One string out of tune will destroy the music of an instrument, otherwise perfect; so, if all the members of a church, neighborhood, and family, do not cultivate a kind and affectionate temper, there will be discord and every evil work."

A Powerful Argument.—At a debating society in Indiana, the question for discussion one evening, was, "Which is the greatest evil, a scolding wife, or a smoky chimny?" After the appointed disputants had concluded the debate, a spectator rose and and begged the privilge of making a remark on the occasion. Permission being granted, he delivered himself in this way:

"Mr. President, I've been almost mad a-listening to the debate of these ere youngsters. They don't know nothing about the subject. What do they know about the evils of a scolding wife? Wait till they have one for twenty years and have been hammered and jammered and slammed all the while; wait till they have been scolded because the baby cried, because the fire wouldn't burn, because the oven was too hot, because the cow kicked over the milk, because the hens didn't lay, because the butter wouldn't come, because they come too soon for dinner, because they were one minute too late, because they sung, because they tore their pantaloons, because they invited a neighbor woman to call again, because they get sick, or did anything else, before they talk about the evils of a scolding wife; why, Mr. President, I'd rather hear the clatter of stones, and twenty tin pans, and nine brass kettles, than the din, din, of a scolding wife. Yes, sir-ree, I would: to my mind, Mr. President, a smoky chimny is no more to be compared to a scolding wife, than a little nigger is to a dark night."

☞The Boston Post says, Mr Walsh writes from Paris that "extravagance in dress never was so great under royalty as since we lived in a republic. There are fabrics in silks and satins as high as twenty, thirty and forty dollars the yard; the dress, without the making, mounts to from 300 to 500 dollars."

☞Custom is the plague of wise men, and the idol of fools.